Gary Sinise & Robert Irvine Help us Celebrate 20 years
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BAMC FOCUS
JUNE 2016

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SAMHS
San Antonio Military Health System
Proud Partner
Team BAMC,

June 14th marks the U.S. Army’s 241st birthday -- a day to celebrate America’s Army and the continued strength, dedication and courage of our Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians.

Two hundred forty-one years ago, our nation’s leaders established the Continental Army. Today, the Army is the strategic land power of the joint force; called upon to prevent, shape, and win against our adversaries. The Army is and always has been the strength of our Nation.

Birthdays tend to make us reflect on our past, on the state of the world around us, on where we are headed. They are a time to reassess whether we are achieving our goals and whether we are adhering to the values we’ve established.

On this birthday, it is clear what we have accomplished and that our Army continues to act in concert with our values and traditions.

In that spirit, I encourage you to participate in the installation Army Birthday run June 10 beginning at 5:15 a.m. at MacArthur Parade Field.

This run is for Soldiers, Family members, and DA Civilians who wish to participate in a safe, orderly, highly motivating run that demonstrates and enhances the superior discipline, commitment, and teamwork that are the hallmarks of our Army.

Uniform for all Soldiers is the Improved Army Physical Fitness Uniform/Army Physical Fitness Uniform, (short sleeve T-shirt, trunks), white or black socks, and reflective PT belt. DA Civilians and Family members participating in the run are encouraged to wear unit T-shirts.

CSM Crews and I look forward to seeing you there as we celebrate the 241st Army Birthday.

A Team of Teams … Creating Tomorrow’s Today!

JEFFREY J. JOHNSON
Colonel, MC
Commanding
Patients rate BAMC in top 10% of hospitals nationwide

By Dewey Mitchell
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center scored in the top 10 percent in a national survey for Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems in overall hospital rating. They recommend BAMC as a customer service leader based on the survey of military and civilian hospitals.

“This survey demonstrates our patients feel the passion of our staff to provide them the absolute highest quality care they can get anywhere,” said Col. Jeffrey Johnson, BAMC commander.

“Our entire team is focused on providing industry leading care to every patient they see, each service member, family member, retiree and civilian trauma patient from all over South Texas,” Johnson said. “Each patient receives the same reliable top quality care and our staff’s expertise and passion. This confidence in the care at BAMC is what is reflected in the HCAHPS survey.”

The survey reflects about 20,000 patient surveys completed between October and December 2015. Two other military hospitals, Ft. Belvoir Community Hospital and Keesler Medical Center, also made the top 10 percent.

The HCAHPS survey is the first national, standardized, publicly reported survey of patients’ perspectives of hospital care. HCAHPS is a survey instrument and data collection methodology for measuring patients’ perceptions of their hospital experience.

While many hospitals have collected information on patient satisfaction for their own internal use, until HCAHPS there was no national standard for collecting and publicly reporting information about patient experience of care that allowed valid comparisons to be made across hospitals locally, regionally and nationally.

The HCAHPS survey asks discharged patients 27 questions about their recent hospital stay. The survey contains 18 core questions about critical aspects of patients’ hospital experiences (communication with nurses and doctors, the responsiveness of hospital staff, the cleanliness and quietness of the hospital environment, pain management, communication about medicines, discharge information, overall rating of hospital, and would they recommend the hospital).

The Refill Pharmacy near the Main PX is closed temporarily for repairs to the facility. The Refill Pharmacy is part of the Community Pharmacy, Building 2401.

New prescriptions can still be filled at this location, but not refills. Prescriptions normally requested and filled at the Refill Pharmacy can be now filled at the CPT Jennifer M. Moreno Clinic Pharmacy or the Brooke Army Medical Center Main Outpatient Pharmacy.

Hours of operations for the Moreno Clinic Pharmacy are Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. BAMC Main Outpatient Pharmacy hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Army Spc. Jen Smith* struggled with the aftermath of a sexual assault for nearly six months before she hit rock bottom. Plagued by nightmares and depression, Smith told her supervisor she was contemplating suicide.

“I was at the end of my rope and that was my cry for help,” she said. “I knew something had to change.”

Smith was referred to Brooke Army Medical Center’s Intensive Outpatient Program for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, which proved a game-changer for the Soldier. “It was like my prayers had been answered,” she said.

Since attending the program last year, “My life and my attitude have changed,” Smith said. “I went from complete isolation to going out and having fun with friends again. Life isn’t perfect, but the program has given me an amazing foundation to build from.”

BAMC’s six-week program launched two years ago to offer short-term, focused care to service members with PTSD resulting from traumatic experiences such as combat, childhood abuse or sexual trauma. Providers have seen tremendous success combining individual and group sessions with evidence-based treatments, explained U.S. Public Health Service Capt. Richard Schobitz, the program’s chief.

“The program is making a tremendous impact and is changing lives for patients with PTSD,” he said.

When they first begin the program, many patients are suicidal or struggling with substance and alcohol abuse. The resultant depression and anxiety can lead to crippling isolation, Schobitz noted, as well as nightmares, insomnia, panic attacks and outbursts of anger.

“Patients with PTSD are less apt to engage with family and friends and do enjoyable activities, such as going to birthday parties or the pool with their kids,” he said. “Some stop leaving their homes at all. We focus on helping our patients recapture the joy in their lives.”

Providers encourage patients to end the isolation and re-engage with the world around them through therapies called Prolonged Exposure and Acceptance and Commitment. They take trips downtown and to department stores, and re-learn how to navigate crowds. They also focus on mindfulness, or being present in the moment, Schobitz said, an important aspect of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

“PTSD patients often dwell in the past or have anxiety about the future,” he said. “Walking around gardens at the Warrior and Family Support Center, observing nature, just being present in the moment, can be very healing. We want patients to feel their emotions, not fight them.”

Providers also encourage patients to identify and take steps to achieve their values, such as being a better spouse or parent.

Smith is among the nearly 100 service members who have attended the program. The success has been impressive across the board, Schobitz noted, both anecdotally and statistically.

At the conclusion of a recent female-only cohort, the scores on the Post-traumatic Diagnostic Scale, or PDS-5, a self-report measure used to measure the severity of PTSD symptoms, decreased by an average of 49 points. This is important as PDS-5 scores range from 0 to 80, with 80 reflecting the most severe symptoms, noted Melissa Ramirez, a licensed clinical social worker at the IOP.

Other cohorts have reported a nearly 25 point drop on the PDS-5, she said. “A drop of 10 is significant,” she said. “We’re doubling that on average in only six weeks.

“These results are very rewarding,” she added. “We see service members who are five to 30 years post-trauma, and it’s had a major impact on their lives. We are seeing people regain the joy in their lives, reconnect with their loved ones . . . they still have moments of challenge, but now they can better handle it.”

Ramirez said what’s most striking is the difference in their appearance post-program. Providers take a photo of patients at week 1 and during the final week. “There’s a profound difference in their face, she noted. “In the final week, they look well-rested, less stressed, happier, more relaxed. The impact is highly visible.”

A year out from the program, Smith has good days and bad, but feels confident she now has the tools to cope. “I still see counselors to keep myself on track. But I’m doing so much better than I would have done otherwise,” she said. “My biggest takeaway is life does go on. It gets better.

“It’s important to step forward and get help,” she added. “People do care. If you don’t find the help you need right away, keep asking. Keep on searching for what’s going to help you.”

For more information on the Intensive Outpatient Program, speak to your provider or call Schobitz at 210-808-2585.

*(Spc. Smith’s name was changed to protect her privacy.)
Courtney Boyer, vice president of the BAMC Auxiliary, and Rachel Ifrig, golf tournament chair, present Inge Godfrey (center), BAMC Fisher House manager, a check for $56,000 at the BAMC Welfare Recognition Ceremony May 13. The funds were raised from the annual Fisher House Charity Golf Tournament held on April 11 at the Dominion Golf Club.

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

The Brooke Army Medical Center Auxiliary held its annual welfare recognition ceremony May 13 in the San Antonio Military Medical Center auditorium.

“The welfare committee is responsible for issuing grants that support the BAMC mission,” said Anne Feldman, BAMC Auxiliary president. “This is no small task given the amount of requests this committee receives.”

This year, the welfare committee approved grants totaling $37,000 to help support 38 BAMC departments. The grants provide funding for a variety of items throughout several departments within BAMC as well as the Fisher House and the Warrior and Family Support Center.

“This is my favorite day of the year,” Feldman said. “It’s neat to see what all you are using in the clinics to help your patients and how you are supporting each other and coming together.”

The requests varied from the purchase of patient educational materials to more unique items such as anatomical models, clothing and a portable shower room sound system for burn patients, TV/DVD players and a gift basket for BAMC’s first baby of the New Year.

“A lot of what all of us do is education, and a lot of the materials we need we cannot obtain through the normal channels, so this is a tremendous help,” said Debbie Bray, pulmonary clinical nurse specialist. “I’m just so appreciative.”

The staff from 5 East requested and received Comfort Cubs, which are stuffed bears that weigh about 7 pounds. The bears will be presented to parents who have suffered the loss of a newborn to help with their grieving process.

“The recovery time for women who have something tangible to hold is shorter and the journey is not as difficult,” said Barbara Johnson, bereavement nurse. “We are always looking for new ideas on how to help these parents [who suffer a loss of a child].”

The funds to support the welfare grants comes from the sales of popcorn by the BAMC Kernel Club.

The auxiliary also presented a check in the amount of $56,000 to Inge Godfrey, BAMC Fisher House manager. The funds were raised from the annual Fisher House Charity Golf Tournament held on April 11 at the Dominion Golf Club.

“We at the BAMC Auxiliary extend a special thank you to those who provide world-class care to service members, retirees and their families,” Feldman said.

“Remarkable things are happening in military medicine and the Brooke Army Medical Center and the BAMC Auxiliary stands in awe of what you do and we are humbled to have the opportunity to support your efforts.”
BAMC marks tobacco-free milestone with butt-can smash

By Elaine Sanchez
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center marked a tobacco-free milestone with a sledgehammer-wielding butt-can smash and removal of the last standing smoke shack.

“We are proud to say that, as of today, BAMC is tobacco free,” BAMC Command Sgt. Maj. Albert Crews said.

“It’s a tremendous thing we are doing here,” said Debbie Bray, RN, CNS, pulmonary clinical nurse specialist and one of the butt-can smashers.

BAMC began its tobacco-free journey on Feb. 1, when patients, staff and visitors to BAMC were informed that they soon would no longer be able light up, chew, or use any tobacco product – whether cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, vaping devices, cigars or pipes -- on the facility’s campus. The medical campus includes all property owned, operated, maintained or leased by BAMC, to include the hospital, outlying facilities on Fort Sam Houston and parking lots.

While the policy was instantly in effect for service members, civilian staff and patients were given until June 1.

“We understand tobacco is a hard habit to break,” added Col. Gerald Dallmann, chief, Logistics Division. “But we strongly believe that the benefits far outweigh the challenge of quitting.”

As health risks have come to light, tobacco use has become far less prevalent in society throughout the years, he noted. Smoking rates among adults and teens are less than half what they were in 1964, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Still, 42 million American adults and about 3 million middle and high school students continue to smoke despite the evidence that links smoking to diseases of nearly all organs of the body.

With the public’s health in mind, tobacco-free medical facilities have become increasingly common throughout the nation, Crews said, noting the majority of San Antonio’s hospitals already have joined this effort.

“We are proud to be tobacco free and promote a healthy environment for our patients, staff and visitors,” Crews said. “As a system for health, becoming tobacco free is the right thing to do and demonstrates our commitment to health and wellness.”

To help staff comply with this policy, BAMC has expanded its tobacco cessation support and services to beneficiaries and BAMC’s civil service staff members. To register for tobacco cessation services, contact BAMC Health Promotion by calling 916-7646/7543.

Carl Buckert sledgehammers a butt can during a ceremony to mark BAMC’s final step toward becoming a tobacco-free campus. (Photo by Robert Shields)

BAMC celebrates Nurses Week

BAMC celebrated Nurses Week May 6-12.

Pictured Left: Col. Jennifer Bedick, Brooke Army Medical Center chief nursing officer, presents a colorful skit about the nursing profession May 12.

Pictured Right: BAMC nurses held a 5K Fun Run May 7; the theme was “Culture of Safety.”

(Photo by 2nd Lt. Danny Lee)
Gary Sinise, Robert Irvine help BAMC celebrate 20th anniversary

Gary Sinise, the Lt. Dan Band and celebrity chef Robert Irvine helped celebrate the 20th anniversary of the “new” Brooke Army Medical Center May 6 during the Invincible Spirit Festival at BAMC.

BAMC staff, patients and family members enjoyed food, music and activities throughout the afternoon, including a 20th anniversary video and cake cutting.

The Gary Sinise Foundation sponsored the event for the fourth time at BAMC, and provided free food for more than 8,000 people, live music from the Lt. Dan Band and many family-friendly activities including bounce houses, face painting and a rock climbing tower.

The Robert Irvine Foundation partnered with Sinise and Rudy’s BBQ to cook thousands of hamburgers, brats, chicken and a multitude of side dishes. Service members and civilians also participated in a hot dog eating contest.

Prior to the event, Sinise and Irvine visited the Warrior and Family Support Center and the Center for the Intrepid to spend time with wounded service members and their families. The two celebrities even played a round of wheelchair basketball.

Sinise, the leader of the Lt. Dan Band, named for the character he played in the movie “Forrest Gump,” is an avid supporter of the military. He started his foundation to bring entertainment to service members, wounded warriors and their families.

(Source: BAMC Public Affairs; photos by Robert Shields)
Former patient designs sculpture for dining room

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center’s dining room recently reopened and now there is a piece of unique artwork adorning the wall.

A wounded warrior and former burn patient, Bill Kleinedler, created “Wind Song,” a piece of art made from bent steel and hand-hammered copper.

“My inspiration for the piece came from a cool breeze on my face and the search for tranquility,” he said.

On Oct. 17, 2006, Kleinedler was hit by an improvised explosive device in Iraq. He spent several months at BAMC while recovering from his injuries.

“I am very proud to have a sculpture at BAMC,” Kleinedler said. “I’ve met so many great people and have many memories of being there. It really is a second home to me, so having another sculpture there is a blessing and honor.”

This sculpture is the second piece he has created here. His first is an 18-foot-high, wrought-iron butterfly sculpture that spirals up the massive fireplace in the Warrior and Family Support Center.

“I hope ‘Wind Song’ brings light and inspiration to those who look on it,” he concluded.
BAMC celebrates Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center and the Institute for Surgical Research held an event May 24 to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

BAMC Commander Col. Jeffrey Johnson highlighted one prominent Asian American, Daniel Inouye, a World War II veteran, Medal of Honor recipient and U.S. Senator.

“Daniel Inouye was truly a life-long hero, serving his country until his death at the age of 88,” Johnson said.

“Today we have more than 67,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders serving in the United States military and we are all better for it.”

Retired Air Force Col. Nonie Cabana was the guest speaker for the event. Cabana serves as the Deputy Director for Region 7 for the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project and is on the board of directors for the Organization of the Filipinos in Texas.

Cabana highlighted the diverse backgrounds of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and spoke about this year’s theme, “Walk Together, Embrace Differences, Build Legacies.”

“I learned early on that if you connect with others, embracing kindness and love, it can make an impactful difference,” he said.

“It is imperative that we embrace our commonalities and endure as fellow Americans. Together we can connect and share our life experiences in this society.”

The retired colonel talked about his experience participating in the Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands, New Mexico. He said he marched in part to honor his grandfather-in-law who died during the march in 1942.

“When I was about to give up my fellow marchers encouraged me to the finish line,” Cabana said. “When we walk together bonded by the love of the human race we can accomplish anything we set our mind to.”

Cabana said the military is a model for embracing diversity.

“We have moved beyond tolerance to genuine acceptance and respect,” he said. “No other institution offers individuals the best opportunity to shine other than our military institution.”

Continuing to educate people about cultural diversity and military values is paramount, he added.

“Together we can create a vibrant community where differences are embraced and individuality is celebrated, that’s what America is all about,” Cabana said.

Cabana concluded by talking about building legacies, highlighting many prominent Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in American history.

Aloha Kitchen also entertained the crowd with some traditional Hawaiian dances.

A group from Aloha Kitchen demonstrates traditional Hawaiian dance May 24 during the Brooke Army Medical Center Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebration. (Photo by Robert Shields)
Warriors, student athletes compete in adaptive sports

By Robert Shields
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center’s Warrior Transition Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company held their annual end of year adaptive sports event with student athletes from Cole High School as part of the “Adopt a School Program.”

This year’s program provided a venue for elite student athletes to interact with wounded warriors through an adaptive sports track and field competition.

South Texas Regional Adaptive Paralympic Sports program director Brooke Matula says this is the first time the organization has done a clinic within the civilian community and it’s really meaningful to do this at Cole High School.

“Our goal is to try to spread the word and show the kids what Paralympics are and hopefully get them to understand what this sport is all about,” Matula said. “It’s not about what you can’t do, but what you can do.”

HHC Commander Capt. Jose Capellan said they wanted to do something different for this year’s adaptive sports event.

“We have been doing wheelchair basketball for about four years,” Capellan said. “This year we wanted to take it a new level, so we put together an event that involved all adaptive track and field events.”

Prior to the competition, the students served as Cole High School ambassadors providing a tour of the school and lunch for the WTB athletes. In the afternoon, the students competed in events such as adaptive archery, shot put, discus, and cycling, and listened to motivational speakers.

Cole High School student Haley Mercer practices throwing a discus May 20 during the school’s adaptive sports event. (Photo by Robert Shields)

Brooke Matula, program director for South Texas Regional Adaptive Paralympics, shows Cole High School students how to properly throw a javelin May 20 during the Adaptive Sports Day event. (Photo by Robert Shields)

1st Sgt. Kenneth Rogers looks on as Cole High School Sophomore Gabe Cook shows off his archery skills during an adaptive sports event hosted by the Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company May 20. (Photo by Robert Shields)
Team BAMC runs to promote fitness in Beach to Bay

By 1st Lt. Elyshia Lederer
Clinical Staff Nurse

BAMC was well represented at the 41st Annual Beach to Bay Marathon held May 21 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

More than 2,000 teams from all over the U.S. as well as Kenya, England and Mexico, took part in the six-leg marathon. The race is always held on the third Saturday in May, also known as Armed Forces Day, to honor men and women serving in the U.S. military.

The first race, founded by Capt. John Butterfield, was held in 1976. Beach to Bay has grown in size over the years with team participation making it currently the largest marathon relay in the United States.

Multiple teams competed from BAMC. The official Team BAMC included Army Col. Mark Swofford, 1st leg; Army 1st Lt. Elyshia Lederer, 2nd leg; Army Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Ward, 3rd leg; Army Maj. K. Singer, 4th leg; Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Brian D. Vidrine, 5th leg; and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Albert Crews, 6th leg.

The team participated to encourage others to engage in physical fitness regularly, and continue to strive toward the Performance Triad model. The Performance Triad focuses on activity, sleep and healthy nutrition in order to move Army Medicine to a System of Health.

The course began on the sands of North Padre Island, then wrapped through the Naval Air Station of Corpus Christi, and finishers ended at McCaughan Park. Each leg averaged around 4.4 miles, with some legs running right next to the waterline.

With sand under their feet, the first leg runners began around 7 a.m. in the humid morning air. Runners stretched their limits through each leg, crossing the finish lines drenched in sweat, with some runners completing the 26.2 miles solo.

First aid tents were stationed at the finish to help participants that came in with heat exhaustion, and throughout the course there were several checkpoints with water and aid. The race wrapped up with a downpour over the city, but it didn’t stop race participants from grabbing a slice of pizza and a drink to cool off with their medals in tow.

Free class available for headache sufferers

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

June is National Migraine and Headache Awareness Month and Brooke Army Medical Center Neurology Services offers a free class to provide information about headaches and the treatments available.

More than 36 million people in the United States suffer from migraine headaches. According to the Migraine Research Foundation, the majority of migraine sufferers do not seek medical care for their pain and nearly half are never diagnosed.

“Treatment for migraine can include lifestyle modifications, medication, or other alternative options,” said, Tammee Trawick, Neurology Services registered nurse.

The free headache class is for adult (over 18) military beneficiaries only. It is held on the third Tuesday of each month from 1-3 p.m. in the Neurology conference room.

“Anyone can come to the class,” Trawick said. “I’ve had people that have suffered with migraines for many years who come to the class and learn something new.”

“This class is great for everyone. I discuss several different types of headaches, triggers and treatments available,” she said.

Headaches can result from a wide range of causes both benign and more serious. Brain tissue itself is not sensitive to pain as it lacks pain receptors. Rather, the pain is caused by disturbance of the pain-sensitive structures around the brain.

Muscle contraction, vascular problems or both cause most headaches. Other types of common headaches include tension, sinus and cluster headaches. There are several different types of migraine as well.

“If someone is suffering from a certain type of headache and they aren’t getting the right type of treatment it’s very important for them to not give up,” she said. “Medication overuse is common and can lead to chronic daily headaches.”

Anyone wanting more information about the class can call 916-2203. No referrals are necessary. Reserve your seat today.
Fitness Buffs

Tony Horton, a well-known fitness trainer and author, shares his tips for a healthy lifestyle during a visit with patients and staff at Brooke Army Medical Center May 20. (Photo by Elaine Sanchez)

Former Spur Visits

Former basketball star Malik Rose visits with Tehjai Edney May 12 at the Center for the Intrepid. He also visited the Warrior and Family Support Center to sign autographs and visit with patients. Rose played with the San Antonio Spurs from 1997 to 2005. (Photo by Robert Shields)

WTB Relinquishment of Command Ceremony

Lt. Col. Michael Harper (right) passes the colors to Brooke Army Medical Center Commander Col. Jeffrey Johnson (center), relinquishing his command of the BAMC Warrior Transition Battalion during a ceremony May 25 at Freedom Park Amphitheater at the Warrior and Family Support Center. Maj. Cynthia Lambert (left) stands ready to accept the colors to assume command of the WTB. (Photo by Robert Shields)
BAMC Troop Command Change of Command

Incoming commander Lt. Col. Lee Freeman (left) accepts the colors from Brooke Army Medical Center Commander Col. Jeffrey Johnson (center) assuming command of BAMC Troop Command during a ceremony May 27 at Freedom Park Amphitheater at the Warrior and Family Support Center as outgoing commander Lt. Col. Gary Cooper (right) looks on. (Photo by Lori Newman)

Soldier Readiness

Malik West, supply supervisor, and Robert Jackson, supply technician, check Staff Sgt. Michael Leach’s clothing records to ensure his annual mandatory inventory/inspection requirement had been performed during Soldier Readiness Processing, or SRP, at Brooke Army Medical Center, May 25, 2016. SRP verifies Soldiers’ individual readiness for deployment and includes checking Soldiers’ medical records, family care plans, and readiness and deployment checklists among other items. (Photo by Elaine Sanchez)

Scholarship in Action
